

HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY EDUCATION COUNCIL
MINUTES

May 2, 2007

Baton Rouge, La

The following constitute minutes of the Hunting and Fishing Advisory Council Meeting
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Tapes of the meetings are kept at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

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**HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY EDUCATION COUNCIL
MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, May 2, 2007 - 2:30 p.m.
4th Floor Conference Room
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries Headquarters
2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, La.**

1.	Roll Call	1
2.	Approval of Minutes of January 31, 2007	1
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MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE HUNTING AND FISHING ADVISORY COUNCIL.

May 2, 2007

Roll Call

Members of the Advisory Council in attendance included Vance Gordon for E.R. "Smitty" Smith, Nelson Roth, Will Courtney, Mike Rainwater, Samuel Smith, Dave Moreland, Russell Lantier for Shane Crochet, Woody Crews, Senator Max Malone, Eric Sunstrum, Steven Pellessier, Chris Holmes and Dr. Donald Reed.

Members absent from the meeting were Captain Jeff Poe and Representative Wilfred Pierre.

Secretary Bryant O. Hammett Jr., Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, was also present and presided over the meeting.

Approval of Minutes of January 31, 2007

Sec. Hammett called for a motion for approval of the January 31, 2007 minutes. A motion for approval was made by Woody Crews and seconded by Will Courtney. The minutes were accepted without correction and the motion passed with no opposition.

Welcome and Opening Comments were made by Sec. Hammett adding that the meeting will proceed in a different order than the agenda notes in consideration of attendees who may be leaving before the meeting is adjourned.

Legislative Update

Sec. Hammett addressed the importance of going through our legislative procedure since there has been some concern about what legislation has been submitted, as well as details concerning individual pieces of legislation. Sec. Hammett introduced Lt. Col Jeff Mayne, LDWF Enforcement Division, as our point man on legislation.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that he would proceed through the list of legislation that the Department is tracking and allow an opportunity for questions.

House Bills & Resolutions

HB 159 by Morrish. **BOAT TRAILER FEE/AQUATIC PLANT CONTROL**. Extends without sunset the \$3.25 additional annual fee on boat trailer registration (assessed on a 4-year registration renewal basis) that is dedicated to the Aquatic Plant Control Fund.

This provision will generate about five to six hundred (???) a year.

Sec. Hammett points out that this is a fourth of the total budget.

HB 205 by Smith. **INCOME TAX EXEMPTION FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN.** Provides for an individual income tax exemption for certain commercial fishermen for all taxable periods beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2007 and ending on or before Dec. 31, 2010.

HB 311 by Jack Smith. **COMMERCIAL CRAWFISHING.** Exempts for 2 years from the trip ticket program that accounts for the harvest and sale of seafood in the state, the commercial sale of crawfish.

Lt. Col Mayne asked Gary Tilyou, Inland Fisheries Division Administrator of LDWF, to explain House Bill 311 further.

Mr. Tilyou explained that when a buyer buys crawfish from fisherman, we have to ask not only where they caught it but around where they caught it. We did cover that this could cause damage to fisherman. It is still on the list and is a high priority for shrimp fisherman and oyster fisherman. Not having it could have a negative impact on them.

Sec. Hammett asked Mr. Tilyou to find out why the crawfish industry does not want to participate in the trip ticket program.

Mr. Tilyou stated that he had met with Rep. Karen St. Germain.

John Roussel, Deputy Asst. Sec of LDWF, stated that this is the only program that can serve as a monitor and if you exempt it, there will be no way to document levels of production.

Lt. Col Mayne added that the farm crawfisherman do not understand why they should participate.

Sec. Hammett reiterated the open opportunity to ask questions on any individual piece of legislation.

HB 325 by Pierre. **OYSTER BAYOU FISHING VESSELS.** Exempts manned, self-propelled and documented vessels actively engaged in fishing from the prohibition against anchoring in Oyster Bayou as long as such vessels do not impede navigation.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that there has been controversy between Shrimping vessels and Oyster fisherman and suggest that this will become a user group problem.

Sec. Hammett indicated to attendees which legislation the Department is sponsoring.

HB 326 by Jack Smith, et al. **MOTORBOAT REGISTRATION FEE.** Makes housekeeping changes to the law regarding motorboat registration fees.

Lt. Col Mayne gave an example concerning an 18 ft vessel, explaining that this legislation will actually identify what is required for an in particular vessel replacing the previous vague statutes. **(is this what he was talking about????)**

Vance Gordon for Smitty Smith asked if this will generate additional revenue.

Lt. Col Mayne confirmed revenue of approximately \$4,000.

HB 327 by Lambert, et al. **OBSTRUCTION OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS.** Prohibits the concealment, destruction or deposit of fish/wildlife taken illegally when such would affect a criminal proceeding; makes such a Class Six violation.

Lt. Col Mayne explained further that we would not have to go to a jury trial and this will aid and increase compliance with those areas as well as keep people from obstruction of justice.

HB 328 by Pierre, et al. **LDWF ELECTRONIC LICENSING.** Authorizes the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries to enter into multi-year contracts up to 10 years in duration for issuing licenses electronically and provides for RFPs for such services.

Lt. Col Mayne adds that this will eliminate the need to continue with a constant process of finding new vendors.

HB 329 by St. Germain, et al. **SHRIMPING GEAR/BUTTERFLY & SKIMMER NETS.** Includes butterfly and skimmer nets along with trawls with respect to various restrictions and allowances for use for taking shrimp and other species in certain coastal waters.

Lt. Col Mayne: explained in further detail about the gear and nets in commercial use where several places in title 56 need to be clarified. This clarifies the technical aspects like no skimmer or butterfly.

Mr. Crews added that there had been some confusion on sanctions in Lake Pontchartrain and asked if it addresses them geographically.

Lt. Col Mayne confirmed that the legislation did reflect geographical descriptions of the sanctions.

HB 330 by Pierre, et al. **FINFISH STOCK ASSESSMENTS**. Changes the requirement of preparing stock assessments for sheepshead, flounder and black drum from annual to biannual and provides for flexibility in the management of these species when the spawning potential ratio is less than 30 percent such that, based on various considerations, fishing could continue under a management plan intended to restore the SPR to above 30 percent.

HB 331 by St. Germain, et al. **REPTILES/AMPHIBIANS**. Provides for a 3-consecutive-day nonresident reptile/amphibian wholesale-retail dealer's license for a \$75 fee.

Lt. Col Mayne asked Fisheries to clarify House Bill 331.

Karen Foot, Marine Fisheries Div. Administrator of LDWF, explained further details concerning the legislation giving another option instead of closing it down.

Lt. Col Mayne referenced another Department bill that we currently have concerning amphibians that lure non resident dealers to the state. This type of licensing, especially the tree day license for \$75.00, will increase sales and increase the likelihood that the individuals will actually purchase a license.

HB 356 by Frith. **OYSTERS/VERMILION BAY**. Extends the time for transplanting oysters and oyster cultch in a portion of Vermilion Bay through April 30th until 2010.

HB 378 by Baldone. **LITTER PICK-UP/ADOPT A BAYOU**. Establishes an "Adopt A Bayou" litter abatement program and requirements for participation.

Sec. Hammett added that this program is similar to "Adopt A Highway."

HB 397 by Smiley. **DEER DOG HUNTING/MAUREPAS SWAMP WMA**. Authorizes the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission to allow a 9-day hunting season for deer with the aid of dogs, restricted to the use of shotguns and buckshot, on the Maurepas Swamp WMA, that would include the last 9 days of the modern firearm deer hunting season.

Dave Moreland explained that this allows steel hunting for 16 days from December 16th until December 30th leaving the last nine days open for hunters to hunt with dogs.

Stephen Pellessier stated that this will impact a log of small game hunters.

Mr. Moreland added that when you start running dogs, several thousands of acres are needed. This may interfere with duck and small game hunting.

Sec. Hammett asked if we have ever allowed dog hunting in Wildlife Management Areas.

Mr. Moreland responded that retrievers have been allowed in the past for duck hunting.

Mr. Pellessier added that he thought that this was a good idea that should be supported.

Will Courtney added that the hunters who still hunt with dogs are doing so as a part of their culture.

Mr. Moreland states that to his understanding, the landowner will no longer allow hunting with dogs. There are some areas around the bulk of the area that has historically been used for dog hunting

Eric Sunstrum stated that he has dealt with the issue for a short time.

Mr. Moreland explained that the issue of hunting deer with dogs is not a threat from the biology standpoint but is strictly a social issue related to problems that the dogs may create.

Mr. Gordon asked if the author might be open to putting some sort of dog identification requirement in the bill.

Mr. Moreland said that he had not talked to him directly, but plans to speak with him.

Russell Lantier for Shane Crochet expressed his concern that this type of hunting would prove to be extremely disruptive and he was sure that bow hunters would also oppose.

Lt. Col Mayne added that there seems to be contention on both sides of the issue.

Dr. Donald Reed asked the about the possibility that this could be tested on a temporary basis.

Mr. Moreland replied that the hunters have had a very good deer harvest and something along those lines may be able to be set up.

Mr. Sunstrom asked the possibility that the season could vary from year to year.

Mr. Moreland explained that there has been an attempt to standardize the dates in order for the public to set their vacation time accordingly.

HB 428 by John Smith, et al. **MILITARY HUNTING/FISHING LICENSE TAX CREDIT.** Provides for, in lieu of reduced license fees, a refundable state income tax credit to active military personnel and their immediate families representing the amount paid for noncommercial Louisiana hunting and fishing licenses purchased; further provides details of the information required on the tax credit application form.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that the Department is having a problem issuing these licenses. This legislation will allow everyone to pay the same price and allow for a tax credit.

Mr. Sunstrom explained that the revenue would increase and the state would pick up the slack.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that there have been problems not only for the Department, but also a larger problem for individuals trying to purchase the license

HB 453 by Odinet. **OYSTER VIOLATIONS/VMS.** Applies the requirement of fishing only from a vessel equipped with a vessel monitoring device to penalties for all violations of law and regulation pertaining to oyster harvest, the duration of such requirement depending on the frequency of violation by the offender.

Lt. Col Mayne explains that there are certain oyster violations if you harvest undersized oysters. Upon the first offense, a vessel monitoring system would be placed on that vessel. The device is a tracking device that will allow the Department to monitor the vessel. The offender will also be required to furnish the cost of the system.

HB 514 by Kenney. **GAMEFISH IMPORTATION.** Allows the importation of certain gamefish fingerlings and all sizes of largemouth bass for stocking in private and approved public waters.

Lt. Col Mayne explains that this applies to largemouth bass and will take size restriction off bass to aid individuals in the business, where often bass may grow too fast and they are left with nothing to do with the fish. This would allow them to capitalize.

Sec. Hammett asked Mr. Tilyou if he had any comments.

Mr. Tilyou stated that he supported the bill

HB 524 by Jack Smith. **VESSEL TITLING ACT.** Authorizes the establishment of a vessel titling program for vessels of model year 2008 or newer with a minimum value of \$1,000; requires the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to promulgate rules and regulations to implement the program by Jan.1, 2008.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that this bill is similar to Department legislation that we attempted a few years ago. This would allow for titles to be purchased for vessels of 2008 models and forward to allow the individual another facet from which to secure a loan.

Sec. Hammett asked if other states had similar titling acts.

Lt. Col Mayne stated that 36 states have enacted similar acts. Not only can it be used for an identifier of ownership, it can benefit the department. Also, the vessel and trailer could

be handled at the same location to serve as a one stop shop to enable the public to deal with only one agency instead of two.

HB 538 by Baldone. **CHARTER BOAT FUEL TAX CREDIT.** Provides for a state income tax credit for state fuels taxes paid by charter fishing vessel operators on fuel purchased to operate their vessels.

Lt. Col Mayne explains that there is not currently a tax credit and this would allow for it, but probably at current state, anyone could buy the license and have their fuel paid for.

HB 572 by Jack Smith. **ALLIGATOR HARVEST MANAGEMENT.** Requires that a minimum of 70,000 tags be issued annually to licensed alligator harvesters and sets a 6 percent maximum return of alligators 48 inches in length to the wild by alligator ranchers participating in the alligator egg collection program.

Mr. Bowman stated that this is a significant departure from our current alligator program. The farmers are required to put back 12 percent of the hatched eggs once they reach 48 inches. This could cut that return rate in half and double the tags. That would be a significant departure from our industry. It is unclear how the fish and wildlife service would use this. We hope to talk to the author because they assume that they have had complaints that there are too many alligators. The Department is concerned about the amount of alligators harvested because this is a long lived animal that takes a long time to reproduce. This bill could take it into warp speed.

Sec. Hammett suggested that we do, in fact speak with the author.

Mr. Bowman explains that for the sake of the tourist industry, by mere nature, we have to follow an extremely structured program or we may find ourselves again in a time that the species is endangered. Also, we need to consider that Louisiana has a program that is modeled throughout the world.

HB 599 by Waddell. **MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASON.** Defines the type of weapons that can be used in the muzzleloader firearms deer hunting seasons to include muzzle loading shotguns and rifles and breech-loading cartridge firearms manufactured (or replicas of those manufactured) prior to 1900.

Mr. Moreland explains that the primary concern with this bill is that, judging by the description, the modern inline rifle is illegal. The problems could be corrected.

Sec. Hammett stated that he had spoken with the representative at Waddill and it was not his intention to be exclusive of what is used now, but to be inclusive of what could also be used.

HB 611 by Kenney. **DEER TAGS.** Provides for the issuance of one hunter's choice tag (buck or doe) and 3 buck tags per big game license; further provides for the opportunity to purchase for \$20 two additional hunter's choice tags.

Mr. Moreland explains that this will help to maintain a balanced harvest. The working tag allotment seems to be more than sufficient. Twelve percent of hunters killed 3 bucks and we have hopes that they will let young deer pass and get in to older age.

HB 747 by Baudoin. **ATV AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLE OPERATION.** Provides relative to the operation of all-terrain and other off-road vehicles; would require helmets, training and adult supervision for riders of all-terrain vehicles under the age of 16; would prohibit children under six from operating ATVs. Provides otherwise with respect to such vehicles. Provides penalties.

Sec. Hammett adds that there was a push a few years ago similar to this and that there was a great concern about those who own property on both sides of the road. The bill died.

HB 830 by Wooton. **FINFISH TRAWLS.** Would establish a fish trawl gear license and provide for the requirements, restrictions and regulations for use of such gear to take commercial finfish and the penalties for violations.

Lt. Col Mayne explains that this bill proposes a maximum size mesh on trip and shrimp gear and defines a higher level of mesh. In addition, it will open up a new season that would allow them to be used for fish outside of the shrimp season.

Senate Bills & Resolutions

SB 117 by Malone. **FEEDING GATORS.** Prohibits the intentional feeding of wild alligators; excepts researchers and agency personnel and licensed alligator trappers.

Mr. Bowman points out the number of incidents in Florida. The department attempts to minimize the interaction between humans and alligators. Another concern deals with swamp tours where guides hit on the side of the boat and then feed the alligators.

Mr. Sunstrom suggests that maybe some compromise can be made; taking into consideration that people come from all over the world to take a tour of the swamp.

Mr. Bowman stated that he would be happy to speak with or work with them on the issue.

SB 123 by Ullo. **UNDERWATER OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL FUND.** Changes the termination date of the Underwater Obstruction Removal Fund from 2007 to 2012.

Sec. Hammett noted discussion at the previous January 31st meeting where a detailed presentation was made concerning the fiscal situation and the dependency on licensing as well as his push to find a stable revenue source for the Department in order to have a sense of predictability for the program.

Mrs. Janice Lansing stated that the Department has filed for reimbursement with FEMA and has been functioning almost completely by using conservation fund dollars.

Mr. Crews suggested that research be done to identify a marketing strategy to be presented to raise awareness of the Department's new found positions and duties. Mrs. Lansing explained that the economy is stronger than what was projected, and therefore, it may be a good time to request additional funds.

Sec. Hammett asked for comments concerning our point of sale.

Ms. Janis Landry stated that anytime we change vendors, certain glitches will be encountered.

Mr. Lansing stated that a major positive in the situation is that the vendors in the local areas now have the equipment that they are comfortable using. Also, anytime that you convert to a new vendor, some issues will have to be dealt with, but we ask that you are patient.

Sec. Hammett stated that added that before legislative session may be our best opportunity to do something that will benefit the department

Mr. Roussel stated that the aquatic plant bill will be on the floor. He explained that he had some concerns concerning the aquatic weed budget and that there are a lot of people that seem to have assured many people that they will not increase taxes. Also, this is just a concern, and it is a renewal and not an increase.

Sec. Hammett explained details concerning problems that are potentially affecting every water way in the state. He also asked members and attendees to show their support next week.

Mr. Will Courtney stated that there may be some grant money available for wash stations. He added that LSU has completed some research projects and education is an important component.

Promotional Programs Update

Mr. Bo Boehringer asked Sec. Hammett if he could update him briefly on the three items marked as Wildlife and Fisheries special events which could serve as media opportunities (See Attachment) along with some youth opportunities.

Mr. Moreland gave details surrounding various youth hunting opportunities as well as intentions to find a way that wheel chair confined individuals can also participate in waterfowl hunts.

Mr. Boehringer explained the history involved with the Discover Louisiana Hunting Program. The first year was 2005 with participants between the ages of 16 and above with their only requirement being that they have a licensed hunter as a host. The host hunter advises them of when to shoot or “lay back.” The first year, one hurricane hit and the promotion process started late with a result of 94 permit participants. In 2006, planning began in June of 2006. Flyers were printed and the academy gave promotional space for six weeks in a row. There were 90 participants the second year. We plan to work through the process again and invite your suggestions in order to further stimulate the promotion effort and get the population involved. Some think that requirement of hunter education is part of the problem and we plan to work through this process again. Bass Pro Shop in Bossier offers hunter education in their stores and they may be able to serve as a corporate sponsor. .

Other Business

No other business presented.

Set Next Meeting Date

Mr. Boehringer suggested that the Council set the next meeting date.

Suggestions were made to meet again after session.

Receive Public Comment

An invitation for public comment was made.

No public comment was offered.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Samuel Smith to adjourn and a second was offered by Mr. Will Courtney.

Meeting was adjourned.

Bryant O. Hammett, Jr.

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